# ESSENTIAL PRACTICES IN THE BLESSED MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

## *In Light of The Ḥādīth of Allāh's Messenger* ﷺ

MUFTĪ MAḤMŪD ASHRAF 'UTHMĀNĪ

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

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**Translators Foreword**

Ramaḍān is one of the most important months in the life of a Muslim. It is a month of numerous opportunities for attaining salvation and the pleasure of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى.

The following summarizes the significance of this blessed month for a Muslim's spiritual health:

“Each year we are reminded that this Ramaḍān may be our final one. We also often remember those who were here last year but have passed on to Allah since then. Amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, Ramaḍān, by the will of Allah, is the lifeline we desperately need: patience through fasting, tranquility through the night prayer, purification through repentance, comfort through du‘ā’, and contentment through dhikr.” (Prepare for Ramaḍān, *lifewithAllah.com*)

When it comes to the translation of this booklet, I have tried to ensure that the meaning of the text is fully encapsulated. However, there were four parts, two in the middle and two at the end, that I chose to omit in order to make the translation more concise or authentic.

I hope that everyone who reads this text finds it useful. Remember to supplicate for the author, Muftī Maḥmūd Ashraf ʿUthmānī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ, as well as all those who helped in compiling the original Urdu text and the English translation.

May Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى bless us and have mercy on us in this month, and may He protect us from the fire of Hell. *Āmīn*.

**The virtue of the month of Ramaḍān**

The blessed month of Ramaḍān is the most virtuous month of the year for it is during this month that the Qur'ān was revealed. Two months before its arrival, Allāh's messenger ﷺ would await the coming of the blessed month of Ramaḍān. Upon sighting the crescent for Rajab, he would supplicate:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْ رَجَبٍ وَشَعْبَانَ وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَان (1)

O Allāh! Grant us barakah in Rajab and Shaʿbān, and allow us to reach Ramaḍān. (Al-Bayhaqi and Al-Tabarāni)

Following Rajab is the month of Shaʿbān, followed by the month of Ramaḍān. However, he ﷺ would wait for it from Rajab itself. For this reason, each Muslim should make this supplication and begin preparing for Ramaḍān. If Muslims were to set their affairs straight in the months of Rajab and Shaʿbān, then Ramaḍān will be easier and a Muslim will find it simple to engage in the acts of worship.

After the passing of Rajab and Shaʿbān, a day before the start of Ramaḍān, Allāh's messenger ﷺ addressed a gathering of the companions, explaining the significance of Ramaḍān, saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ أَظَلَّكُمْ شَهْرٌ عَظِيمٌ شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ شَهْرٌ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مَنْ أَلْفِ شهر جعل الله تَعَالَى صِيَامَهُ فَرِيضَةً وَقِيَامَ لَيْلِهِ تَطَوُّعًا مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ فِيهِ بخصلة من الْخَيْرِ كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى فَرِيضَةً فِيمَا سِوَاهُ وَمَنْ أَدَّى فَرِيضَةً فِيهِ كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى سَبْعِينَ فَرِيضَةً فِيمَا سِوَاهُ وَهُوَ شَهْرُ

الصَّبْرِ وَالصَّبْر ثَوَابه الْجنَّة وَشهر الْمُوَاسَاة وَشهر يزْدَاد فِيهِ رِزْقُ الْمُؤْمِنِ مَنْ فَطَّرَ فِيهِ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مَغْفِرَةً لِذُنُوبِهِ وَعِتْقَ رَقَبَتِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَكَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَجْرِهِ شَيْءٌ» قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ كلنا يجد مَا نُفَطِّرُ بِهِ الصَّائِمَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «يُعْطِي اللَّهُ هَذَا الثَّوَابَ مَنْ فَطَّرَ صَائِمًا عَلَى مَذْقَةِ لَبَنٍ أَوْ تَمْرَةٍ أَوْ شَرْبَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ وَمَنْ أَشْبَعَ صَائِمًا سَقَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَوْضِي شَرْبَةً لَا يَظْمَأُ حَتَّى يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَهُوَ شَهْرٌ أَوَّلُهُ رَحْمَةٌ وَأَوْسَطُهُ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَآخِرُهُ عِتْقٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَنْ خَفَّفَ عَنْ مَمْلُوكِهِ فِيهِ غَفَرَ الله لَهُ وَأعْتقهُ من النَّار (2)

"O' people! There comes upon you now a great month, a blessed month, a month in which there is a night better than a thousand months. Allāh has made its fasting *farḍ* (obligatory act) *and* its night prayer *nafl* (supererogatory prayer). Whoever performs a nafl act in this month, it is like he has done a farḍ in any other month. And whoever does a farḍ act in this month, it is like he has done seventy farāiḍ in any other month. It is a month of perseverance. And the reward of perseverance is Paradise. It is a month of sympathy. It is a month when a believer's provision/sustenance is increased. Whoever gives a fasting person something to break his fast, will have his sins forgiven and saved from the fire of Hell, and he will receive the reward of the fasting person without anything being reduced from his (the fasting person) reward."

We said, "O Allāh's messenger ﷺ, not all of us possess the means to provide for a fasting person to break his fast."

He ﷺ said, "Allāh will also grant this reward to the one who gives a fasting person a sip of milk, a date, or drink of water. And whoever satisfies the fasting person, Allāh shall grant him water from my pond (of *Al-Kawthar*) that will not make him thirsty until he enters Paradise. And it is a month in which the first part is mercy, the second is forgiveness, and the third is deliverance from the fire of Hell. The one who lessens the burden of his servant in this month, Allāh shall forgive him and save him from the fire of Hell." (Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ)

**The importance of *taqwā* (piety)**

Among the practices of Ramaḍān is usually the upholding of those matters or good deeds that have been ordered or encouraged. However, the real objective of Ramaḍān is to not commit sins and abstain from them.

**The reality of fasting**

Fasting is farḍ. However, if you were to observe the reality of fasting, it is abstention from eating, drinking, and conjugal relations from dawn until sunset. Thus, if a person were to abstain the whole day from eating, drinking, and conjugal relations for the entire day, his fast is complete. Nothing extra is needed for this fast.

**The goal of fasting is taqwā**

The goal of fasting which has been mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān is:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُون

O you who believe, the fasts have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be God-fearing (Qur'ān 2:183)

According to the Qur'ān the goal of fasting is taqwā. In taqwā, one does not have to do anything. Rather, taqwā refers to not doing something, that is, taqwā refers to abstaining from sins. Thus, if a person abstains from all sins, he is pious even though he does not appear to have done voluntary acts of worship, for no voluntary act of worship is greater than taqwā.

Two men were mentioned in the presence of Allāh's messenger ﷺ. One of them was striving in his *deen* (religion) and observing acts of worship, and the other was careful in abstaining from sins. So, he ﷺ said, "Abstaining from sins is greater than all acts of worship." The Ḥādīth is as follows:

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: ذُكِرَ رَجُلٌ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِعِبَادَةٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ وَذُكِرَ آخَرُ بِرِعَّةٍ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تُعْدِلْ بِالرِّعَّةِ . يَعْنِي الْوَرَعَ. رَوَاهُ الترمذي (3)

So Allāh's messenger ﷺ said that abstaining from sins cannot be compared to anything else. (Al-Tirmidhī)

Allāh's messenger ﷺ addressed Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه saying:

اتَّقِ الْمَحَارِمَ تَكُنْ أَعْبَدَ النَّاس (4)

Abstain from *ḥarām* (forbidden), and you shall be the most devout worshiper. (Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī)

Mullā ʿAli al-Qārī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said, "The greatest worship is that a person fulfills the *farā'iḍ* (sing. farḍ) and *wājibāt* (sing. *wājib*) i.e., rights of Allāh and His creation. Most people leave this and emphasize on a lot of *nawāfil*. Such people destroy the foundations of the *deen* and erect the *faḍā'il* (virtues)." (Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ)

The goal of fasting is taqwā, which means abstaining from sin. So, while it is a mandatory condition binding upon every Muslim to refrain from eating, drinking, and conjugal relations so that his fast is sound and complete, after that, it is incumbent upon him to ensure that his first practice in Ramaḍān is to strive to abstain from all kinds of sin, whether it relates to the tongue, private parts, hands, feet, gaze, or dangerous/evil thoughts. So, the first practice in Ramaḍān is to uphold taqwā.

In the Ḥādīth, a fasting person has been especially instructed to refrain from certain sins other than eating and drinking. These include avoiding immodesty, which includes all immodest acts, speech, gaze, and so on; making noise, shouting, and screaming; fighting, and arguing; false speech and false actions.

Allāh's messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

وَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ صَوْمِ أَحَدِكُمْ، فَلاَ يَرْفُثْ وَلاَ يَصْخَبْ، فَإِنْ سَابَّهُ أَحَدٌ، أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ صَائِمٌ (5)

When one of you is fasting, he should neither indulge in obscene language, nor raise his voice. If someone reviles him or quarrels with him, he should respond, “I am fasting.” (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

He ﷺ also said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ بِأَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ (6)

Whoever does not leave false speech, and acting according to it, then Allāh is not in any need of him leaving his food and his drink. (Al-Bukhārī)

The goal is that if the fasting person gave up permissible food, permissible drink, and permissible sexual relations for Allāh's sake, he should leave backbiting, fraud, and betrayal only for Allāh's sake. These are those actions that are prohibited for the whole year, rather, the entire life. These are those grave (impermissible) practices or in other words, those sins, which should be avoided while fasting.

Regarding those established practices, in light of Ḥādīth, they are as follows.

**Reducing the burden of work on subordinates**

The following words have already appeared in the second Ḥādīth:

وَمَنْ خَفَّفَ عَنْ مَمْلُوكِهِ فِيهِ غَفَرَ الله لَهُ وَأَعْتقهُ مِنَ النَّار

The one who lessens the burden of his servant in this month, Allāh shall forgive him and save him from the fire of Hell. (Al-Bayhaqi)

Thus, during this month, keep worldly tasks to a minimum. And before Ramaḍān, the tasks should be completed in Rajab and Shaʿbān so that there is less work in Ramaḍān and it is easier to fast and worship.

Similarly, the burden of work on one's slaves, servants, household members, and subordinates should be kept to a minimum so that one can be saved from the fire of hell.

**Eating *sahūr* (pre-dawn meal)**

Allāh's messenger ﷺ has encouraged the eating of the sahūr and has considered it a blessed meal. He ﷺ said:

تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُورِ بَرَكَة (7)

Partake of the sahūr. Surely, there is blessing in the sahūr. (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

عَنْ الْعِرْبَاضِ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ قَالَ دَعَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ

وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى السَّحُورِ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَقَالَ هَلُمَّ إِلَى الْغَدَاءِ الْمُبَارَك (8)

It was narrated from Al-Iʿirbāḍ Ibn Sāriyah رضي الله عنه who said, "Allāh's messenger ﷺ invited me to have sahūr in the month of Ramaḍān, and he said, 'Come to the blessed meal.'" (Abū Dā'ūd and Al-Nasā'ī)

Thus, it is *mustaḥabb* (recommended) to partake of the sahūr in the last part of the night, be it a small one.

**Hastening the *iftār* (evening meal)**

When the fast is complete, and the sun disappears below the horizon, one should break the fast. It is disliked to delay it for no apparent reason. Allāh's messenger ﷺ said:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْر (9)

People will continue to be in goodness as long as they hasten to break their fast (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

Thus, the Maghrib farḍ prayer is prayed after breaking the fast. He ﷺ also said:

لاَ يَزَالُ الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا مَا عَجَّلَ النَّاسُ الْفِطْرَ لأَنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى يُؤَخِّرُونَ (10)

The religion will continue to be prevalent as long as people hasten to break their fast for verily the Jews and Christians delay doing so (Abū Dā'ūd and Ibn Majah)

The Jews and Christians had a habit of extremism in their religion. Allāh's messenger ﷺ has stopped us from this extremism i.e., when your fast is complete, that is, when the sun has set, do not prolong your fast. Instead, break your fast and express gratitude to Allāh.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَحَبُّ عِبَادِي إِلَيَّ أَعْجَلُهُمْ فطرا (11)

It was narrated from Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه that Allāh's messenger ﷺ said, "Allāh the Most High said: The most beloved of My slaves are those who are quickest to break their fast." (Al-Tirmidhī)

**Gratitude and supplication when breaking the fast**

When Allāh's messenger ﷺ would break his fast, he would say:

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ وَابْتَلَّتِ العُروق وَثَبَتَ الأَجْرُ إِنْ شاءَ الله (12)

The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened, and the reward is confirmed, if Allāh wills. (Abū Dā'ūd)

He ﷺ would also supplicate to Allāh the following:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ (13)

O' Allāh! For you I fasted, and with your provision I have broken my fast (Abū Dā'ūd)

When breaking the fast, one should express gratitude to Allāh as well as supplicate to Him. It should also be noted that when eating sahūr or iftār, eating the delicious bounties provided by Allāh and expressing heartfelt gratitude to Him is an act of worship as well.

Just as fasting is a form of patience and an act of worship, likewise, to have a sahūr or iftār with lawful provision, and to express gratitude to Allāh is also an act of worship. Rather, it is an act of worship as well when one goes the extra mile of not only eating but also feeding and satisfying another fasting person. This instruction of Allāh's messenger ﷺ has already passed in the second Ḥādīth:

"And whoever satisfies the fasting person, Allāh shall grant him water from my pond (of *al-Kawthar*) that will not make him thirsty until he enters Paradise."

***Qiyām Ramaḍān* (night worship in Ramaḍān)**

The instruction of Allāh's messenger ﷺ has already passed in the second Ḥādīth:

جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى صِيَامَهُ فَرِيضَةً وَقِيَامَ لَيْلِهِ تَطَوُّعًا

Allāh has made its fasting farḍ and its night prayer nafl

The following Ḥādīth appears in Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Saḥīḥ Muslim:

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ. وَمَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ (14)

Whoever fasted in Ramaḍān in a condition of *ʾīmān* (belief) and only intending reward, his past sins shall be forgiven. And he who stood up (at night) in Ramaḍān in a condition of ʾīmān and only intending reward, his past sins shall be forgiven.

There is mention of *qiyām al-layl* and *qiyām Ramaḍān* in these narrations. Qiyām is Arabic for "to stand." It is clear from this that it is preferable for the qiyām in these nawāfil to be longer so that maximum Qur'ān can be recited in them, as Ramaḍān is the month of Qur'ān. At times, the term qiyām can simply refer to worship. So, a person who sits when he is tired, or recites while sitting, or supplicates while sitting, or is excused from standing, or is involved in Allah's remembrance or recitation with sincerity while sitting, or a sick person who is supplicating while lying down; all of these are considered bearers of qiyām *Ramaḍān* and will share in the blessings of this blessed month.

*Tarāwīh* and *tahajjud* are two forms of ʿibādah held in the nights of Ramaḍān, i.e., qiyām Ramaḍān, established by the *sunnah* (Practice of the Prophet ﷺ). These are widely accepted nafl prayers that have been established by Allāh's messenger ﷺ.

**Tarāwīh**

Tarāwīh is a twenty-rakaʿāt prayer that follows the four rakaʿāt of the farḍ and two rakaʿāt of sunnah of Isha prayer. There is a special emphasis on recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān in it, and one entire recital of the Qur'ān is completed in the month. tarāwīh has twenty rakaʿāt, with a short rest between each set of four rakaʿāt. These four rakaʿāt are prayed in pairs. It is sunnah to pray twenty rakaʿāt of tarāwīh and to finish reciting the Qur'ān.

عن السائب بن يزيد قال كُنَّا نَقُومُ فِي زَمَنِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ

بِعِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً. رواه البيهقي في "المعرفة" (15)

It was narrated by Sā'ib ibn Yazīd رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ who said, "We would pray twenty rakaʿāt during the time of ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb." (Al-Bayhaqi)

كَانُوا يَقُومُونَ عَلَى عَهْدِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَة

In another narration, the wording is, "During the time of ʿUmar, the Muslims would pray twenty rakaʿāt in the month of Ramaḍān."

عن يحيى بن سعيد القطان أَنَّ عُمَرَ بنَ الخَطَّابِ أَمَرَ رَجُلا يُصَلِّي

بِهِم عِشرِينَ رَكعَةً (16)

It was narrated from Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd رَحِمَهُٱللَّهُ who said, "'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb instructed a man to lead others in twenty rakaʿāt (of tarāwīh)." (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah)

كان أبي بن كعب يصلي بالناس في رمضان بالمدينة عشرين ركعة

ويوتر بثلاث (17)

ʿAbdul ʿAzīz Ibn Rufayʿ رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ narrated that ʿUbayy Ibn Kaʿb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ would lead people in twenty rakaʿāt of tarāwīh in Ramadan in Madīna and then he would pray 3 rakaat of witr. (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah)

It is for this reason that, from the time of the Ṣaḥābah to the present, the practice in both masjids, whether Masjid Nabawī in Madīna Munawwarah or Masjid Ḥarām in Makkah Mukarramah, has been to pray twenty rakaʿāt.

**Tahajjud**

Tahajjud is the name given to the eight-rakaʿāt nafl prayer (otherwise four rakaʿāt) performed alone upon waking up in the last part of the night. And this is the most superior of all the nafl prayers offered throughout the year. Allāh's messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would diligently observe the tahajjud prayer, whether it was in Ramaḍān or not.

ما كانَ رَسولُ اللَّهِ صلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ يَزِيدُ في رَمَضَانَ ولَا في غيرِهِ علَى إحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً؛ يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فلا تَسَلْ عن حُسْنِهِنَّ وطُولِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فلا تَسَلْ عن حُسْنِهِنَّ وطُولِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي ثَلَاثًا (18)

ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrated, "Allāh's messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would not offer more than eleven rakaʿāt be it in the nights of Ramaḍān or outside it. He would pray four rakaʿāt, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. He would then pray another four rakaʿāt, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. He would then pray three rakaʿāt (of witr)." (Muslim)

Therefore, it is preferable that a person prays twenty rakaʿāt of tarāwīh after *isha* prayer in Ramaḍān, and then eight rakaʿāt (otherwise four rakaʿāt) of tahajjud in the last part of the night, so that both the sunnahs of qiyām Ramaḍān, tarāwīh and tahajjud, are observed.

When Sayyiduna ʿUmar al-Fārūq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ gathered the men praying tarāwīh behind one Imam in Masjid Nabawī, he expressed joy at witnessing this congregation of tarāwīh, but he also directed attention towards tahajjud and said:

والَّتي تنامونَ عنْها أفْضلُ مِنَ الَّتي تقومونَ، يُريدُ آخِرَ اللَّيْل (19)

The prayer (of tahajjud) during which you are sleep is better than the one you are offering (i.e., tarāwīh) (Al-Bukhārī)

The goal was to encourage people to perform acts of worship alongside tarāwīh and to pray tahajjud prayer, which is the most superior nafl prayer offered all year.

**Abundant recitation of the Qur'ān**

It is clearly mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلْقُرْءَان

The month of Ramaḍān is the one in which the Qur'ān was revealed (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 185)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ كَانَ يَعْرِضُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ كُلَّ عَامٍ مَرَّةً، فَعَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ مَرَّتَيْنِ فِي الْعَامِ الَّذِي قُبِضَ (20)

Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ would revise the Qur'ān once every year with Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. But in the year of his passing away, he revised it twice. (Al-Bukhārī)

As a result, all Muslims should recite the Qur'ān as much as they can during this blessed month. They are aware that this is a month of fasting and reciting the Qur'ān. It is also our duty to recite the Qur'ān as much as possible during this blessed month.

**Generosity in Ramaḍān**

Giving charity, gifting, and spending should be prioritized in Ramaḍān based on one's personal ability and the household situation. This good deed includes providing good food and drink to the family, maintaining good ties with neighbors and kin, seeking out the needy and desperate and providing them with necessities, and arranging iftār and sahūr *for* the family and common Muslims.

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ أَجْوَدَ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَان وَكَانَ جِبْرِيلُ يَلْقَاهُ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ فِي رَمَضَانَ يَعْرِضُ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ فَإِذَا لَقِيَهُ جِبْرِيلُ كَانَ أَجْوَدُ بِالْخَيْرِ مِنَ الرِّيح الْمُرْسلَة (21)

It was narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who said, "Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was the most generous of all the people in goodness, and he was most generous in Ramaḍān. Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ would meet him each night in Ramaḍān, and Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would revise the Qur'ān with him. When Jibrīl would meet him, he would be more generous than the wind which brings rain." (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The rain-bearing wind brings forth clouds that rain and this causes the cool and wet effects of the rain to reach even the rooms inside the houses. Likewise, in the blessed month of Ramaḍān, the generosity of the Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would increase and like the rain, it would rain on the entire area and the effects of his generosity would reach far and wide, and even inside the houses.

**The last ten nights**

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ يَجْتَهِدُ فِي رَمضانَ مَالا يَجْتَهِدُ في غَيْرِهِ، وَفِي العَشْرِ الأَوَاخِرِ منْه مَالا يَجْتَهدُ في غَيْرِهِ (22)

It was narrated from ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who said, "Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would exert himself in worship in Ramaḍān more than any other month, and (would exert) in its last ten nights more than the other nights." (Muslim).

وَ عَنْها رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا كانَ النبيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ إذَا دَخَلَ العَشْرُ شَدَّ مِئْزَرَهُ، وأَحْيَا لَيْلَهُ، وأَيْقَظَ أَهْلَهُ (23)

It is also narrated from ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who said, "When the last ten nights (of Ramaḍān) would enter, Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would tighten his waist belt, pray all night, and he would wake his family (to pray). (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

Outside the last ten nights, his blessed habit was neither to spend the entire night in worship nor to emphasize on waking the family up. However, during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, he would spend (nearly) the entire night in worship and he would encourage the rest of the family to do the same. As a result, during the last ten nights, one should devote as much time as possible to worship. Instead of wasting the last ten nights in markets and shopping malls, iʿtikāf, recitation of the Qur'ān, nawāfil, and supplication should be prioritized.

**Seeking *Laylatul Qadr* (Night of Decree)**

عن عائشةَ رضِيَ اللهُ عنها أنَّ رسولَ الله صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّمَ قال: تَحرَّوا لَيلةَ القَدْرِ في الوَتْرِ مِن العَشرِ الأواخِرِ مِن رمضانَ

(24)

It was narrated from ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who said, "Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, 'Seek laylatul qadr in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān.'"

Thus, if necessary, one can rest and complete the tasks on even nights, so that the odd nights could be spent in the worship of Allāh according to one's health and condition.

**The virtue of laylatul qadr**

Laylatul qadr occurs on one of the odd nights of the last ten nights. According to the Qur'ān, this night is superior to a thousand months (eighty-three years and four months). If one is fortunate to receive this night, then one has earned enough for a lifetime.

إذا كان ليلةُ القدرِ نزل جبريلُ عليه السلامُ في كَبْكَبَةٍ من الملائكةِ، يُصَلُّونَ على كلِّ عبدٍ قائمٍ أو قاعدٍ يَذْكُرُ اللهَ عز وجل

(25)

Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "During laylatul qadr, Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ descends to the earth with a group of angels, showering special mercy (from Allah) on every person who is standing or sitting in remembrance of Allāh.". (Al-Bayhaqi)

This matter is also established in Surah Al-Qadr in the Glorious Qur'ān:

تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ سَلَٰمٌ هِىَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ ٱلْفَجْرِ

The angels and al-Rūḥ (Jibrīl) descend in it, with the permission of your Lord, along with every command. Peace it is till the appearance of dawn. (Surah al-Qadr, Verse 4-5)

Allāh's messenger ﷺ also said:

مَنْ حُرِمَهَا فَقَدْ حُرِمَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ وَلاَ يُحْرَمُ خَيْرَهَا إِلاَّ مَحْرُوم (26)

The one who is deprived of this night is deprived of all goodness and none is deprived of its goodness except the truly deprived one. (Ibn Majah)

So laylatul qadr should not be wasted at any cost.

**A special supplication in laylatul qadr**

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ عَلِمْتُ أَيُّ لَيْلَةٍ الْقَدْرِ مَا أَقُولُ فِيهَا؟ قَالَ: " قُولِي: اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعَفُ عَنِّي " (27)

It was narrated from ʿĀ'ishah رضي الله عنها who said, "I asked Allāh's messenger ﷺ, 'What should I recite if I knew it was the laylatul qadr?' He said, 'Recite:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعَفُ عَنِّي

O' Allāh. You are The Most Forgiving, and You love to forgive, so forgive me.'" (Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, Al-Tirmidhī)

Thus, on the odd nights, this supplication from the Ḥādīth should be continuously on our tongues so that forgiveness is decreed for us.

The reality is that if we are forgiven in Allāh's court and forgiveness is decreed for us, what greater success can there be? It is mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān:

فَمَن زُحْزِحَ عَنِ ٱلنَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتَٰعُ ٱلْغُرُورِ

So, whoever has been kept away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has really succeeded. The worldly life is nothing but an illusionary enjoyment. (Surah Āli Imrān, Verse 185)

***I'tikāf* in the last ten nights**

I'tikāf which is an important means of obtaining maximum benefit from the last ten days and laylatul qadr, is also established by the sunnah.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَعْتَكِفُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَاخِرَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى تَوَفَّاهُ اللَّه (28)

It was narrated from 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who said, "Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would observe i'tikāf in the last ten days of Ramaḍān until he passed away." (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

هُوَ يَعْكِفُ الذُّنُوبَ وَ يَجْرِى لَهُ مِنَ الحَسَناتِ كَعامِلِ الحَسَناتِ كُلِّها (29)

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who said, "Allāh's messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said in regards to the person sitting in i'tikāf, 'He is staying away from sins and all good deeds are written for him.'" (Ibn Mājah)

So, the person in iʿtikāf is protected from many sins because he stays in the masjid and does good deeds, and those good deeds he used to do outside the masjid prior to iʿtikāf are automatically incorporated into his good deeds. Thus, iʿtikāf is a significant act of worship to obtain the blessings of the last ten days and laylatul qadr if a person is granted the ability by Allāh. However, there are some things to keep in mind:

a. Iʿtikāf should be performed solely for Allāh's pleasure and to have one's sins forgiven. The goal should not be to pass the time and gain worldly benefit.
b. Iʿtikāf is, in reality, a method of abstaining from sin and engaging in the remembrance and contemplation of Allāh in solitude. So, if iʿtikāf becomes a public affair rather than a private one, an annual reunion with friends, and a social religious gathering rather than engaging in remembrance and contemplation, it will be contrary to the primary goal of iʿtikāf. So iʿtikāf is every Muslim's individual act of worship just like the salāh and fasting. Thus, the concept of 'congregational iʿtikāf' has nothing to do with solitude and iʿtikāf. Remember that iʿtikāf is a means of solitude in which a Muslim detaches from the rest of creation and attaches himself to The Creator, whereas in a congregation a man must inevitably consider meeting people, meeting their needs, and behaving well. While all these acts are praiseworthy and related to the rights one owes to creation (*ḥuqūq al-ʿibād*), they all destroy the essence of iʿtikāf which is solitude and connection with Allāh.
c. One thing to keep in mind regarding iʿtikāf is that those rights owed to creation that are binding on us should not be violated as a result of iʿtikāf, i.e., this iʿtikāf should not be a source of distress for our close ones. What iʿtikāf have we done if our iʿtikāf caused pain to four people and ruinied their sahūr and ifṭār? iʿtikāf is performed to avoid sin rather than to engage in sin. At the end of Faḍā'il-e-Ramaḍān, Shaykh al-Ḥādīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyya رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ mentioned an incident of ʿAbdullah Ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. It would be beneficial to read it.

**A state of continuous *dhikr in* Ramaḍān**

The dhikr of Allāh is a continuous and significant act of worship, but during Ramaḍān, special emphasis should be placed on remembering Allāh with one's tongue at all times; otherwise, it should be done in the heart and with a focus on supplication. The recitation of the Qur'ān, the third kalimah, salawāt (salutations upon Allāh's messenger ﷺ), istighfār (seeking Allāh's forgiveness), and whatever else one is given the ability to do are all included in Allāh's remembrance. In one narration, four things have been specifically mentioned.

Allāh's messenger ﷺ said:

وَاسْتَكْثِرُوا فِيهِ مِنْ أَرْبَعِ خِصَالٍ: خَصْلَتَيْنِ تُرْضُونَ بِهِمَا رَبَّكُمْ، وَخَصْلَتَيْنِ لَا غِنًى بِكُمْ عَنْهُمَا، فَأَمَّا الْخَصْلَتَانِ اللَّتَانِ تُرْضُونَ بِهِمَا رَبَّكُمْ: فَشَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَتَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ، وَأَمَّا اللَّتَانِ لَا غِنًى بِكُمْ عَنْهُمَا: فَتَسْأَلُونَ اللَّهَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَتَعُوذُونَ بِهِ مِنَ النَّارِ (30)

Increase in four things in it (Ramaḍān). Two are such that through them you shall please your Lord, and two are such that you cannot do without them. As for those two with which you shall please your Lord is to testify that there is no one worthy of worship except Allāh and you seek His forgiveness. As for those two things which you cannot do without (i.e., there is no success without) are that you ask Allāh for Paradise and you seek His protection from the fire of Hell.

Keeping this narration in mind, if one keeps reciting the following in Ramaḍān then all four things will be included:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وبَحَمْدِكَ أَشْهدُ أَنْ لا إِلهَ إِلا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسَالِكُ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ غَضَبِكَ والنَّارِ

O’ Allāh! Glory and praise be to You. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except You. I seek Your forgiveness and I repent to You. O’ Allāh! I ask you for Paradise and I seek Your protection from Your wrath and the fire of Hell.

These words of supplication you can be recited these words of supplication after every 4 rakaʿāt of tarāwīh.

وفقنا الله وإياكم لما يحبه ويرضاه

## MUFTĪ MAḤMŪD ASHRAF ʿUTHMĀNĪ (1951-2022)

Shaykh Muftī Maḥmūd Ashraf Usmani was born in 1951. He is the son of Mawlānā Zaki Kayfi (may Allah have mercy on him), who was the eldest son of Muftī Muḥammad Shafīʿ (may Allah have mercy on him).

He completed his ʿālimiyya course at the renowned Jāmiʿah Ashrafiyya in Lahore (Pakistan), where his teachers included Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Idrīs Kāndahlawi (may Allah have mercy on him), amongst others. He then completed the fatwā specialization (takhassus fiʻl-fiqh wa ʻl-iftā) programme at Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi under his grandfather, two uncles (Muftī Muḥammad Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī and Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī) and Shaykh Muftī ʿĀshiq Ilāhi Bulandshehri (may Allah bless them all). Later, he studied at the Islamic University of Medina for approximately two years. As a teacher, he initially taught at Jāmiʿah Ashrafiyya (Lahore) for 19 years, and, thereafter at Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi. he served as a head muftī at the Dār al-Iftā' of Dār al-ʿUlūm Karachi, as well as a teacher of Sahih al-Bukhārī (alongside Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī). He also authored some very beneficial works, such as a booklet on spirituality (taṣawwuf/tazkiya), Knowledge and Forbearance, and Amusements and Play: its Limits in Islam.

Adapted From: Two Weeks In Pakistan by Shaykh Muftī Muḥammad ibn Adam (daruliftaa.com)